KEIZOKU-SCANS
...and the manga goes on
DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES SHARE OUTSIDE OF IRC!

6
Cantarella
Story and Art by
YOU HIGURI

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6
ナースエンジェル

Cantarella

STORY AND ART BY

YOU HIGURI

VOLUME 6

go!comi

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Cantarella 6 Table of Contents

◆ Pope Alexander VI ◆

An ambitious man who sold his own son's soul to the devil in exchange for the Papal throne. He has solidified his authority through nepotism.

◆ Michelotto (Chiaro) ◆

A legendary assassin who wears the mask of "Michelotto." He holds the power to repel the evil spirits possessing Cesare.

◆ Juan Borgia ◆

Cesare's little brother. Favored by his father, he led a blessed life.

◆ Lucrezia Borgia ◆

A sweet girl who adores her older brother, Cesare. She was forced to wed the Lord of Pesaro but she has been called home and now resides in a monastery.

◆Della Volpe◆

Cesare's loyal retainer. He looks up to Cesare because of his tyrannical nature.

◆ Sancia d'Aragon ◆

The wife of the third son in the Borgia family, Jofre, and the illegitimate daughter of the King of Naples. She carried on a secret affair with her brother-in-law, Cesare.

Story So Far

In the last volume, Juan abducted Chiaro and subjected him to brutal torture. Cesare rushed to Chiaro's rescue, only to discover what he believed was Chiaro's dead body. Shattered by the discovery, Cesare allowed the demons within to take over his body. When Chiaro, still alive, discovered his friend's transformation, he vowed to do as he had promised long ago and kill the now inhuman Cesare. Meanwhile, Juan plotted to assassinate his older brother, a scheme that backfired when his brother slaughtered Juan's assassins and then went after him. Juan's death became Cesare's salvation, as Chiaro withdrew his vow to kill his friend when he saw the tears Cesare shed upon his brother's death...

& Cast of Characters

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It is a poison that leaves not a trace, working in secret...

Cesare Borgia

The hero of our story. His father sold his soul to the devil in exchange for gaining the Papal throne. Constantly on the brink of being devoured by the demonic power within in, he is driven by the all-consuming desire to unify Italy.

This work is fiction.

*V*arious cities and territories of Italy during *Cantarella* period

(end of the 15th century)

I'M GOING TO SEE HOW HE'S DOING.
HE'S ...
...TAKING TOO LONG.
...FOR GIVING ME...
...A BROTHER LIKE YOU!
I KNEW IT. YOU'RE... NOT HUMAN!
GET AWAY FROM ME...
Y-YOU DEMON!
I ALWAYS CURSED GOD...
THROB
THROB

WAIT!
THIS IS GOING TO BE EMBARRASSING...
THE MOON...
...IS SHINING SO BRIGHTLY IT HURTS...
LIKE A FINELY SHARPENED SWORD.
DOES THAT BLADE...
...STILL CRAVE THE BLOOD OF A SACRIFICE?
GYAAAH!

EE...
EE!!
CHIARO!
YOU...!
YOU'RE ONE OF JUAN'S FOOTMEN!
GYAAH!!

!
CHI...
...A...
RO...
!
FLAP
FLAP
CHILL
SCUFF
I DON'T THINK HE'S GONE THAT FAR.
WHAT'S THIS FEELING?
Ng.
Ah.
AND... THAT VOICE...
Ah.
DASH
CESARE?!
YES... THIS VOICE IS...

CRACK
CRACK
AAAAAH!
CESARE!

AH!
AAAAH!
CE...!
UH...
AH!
AAAH!!

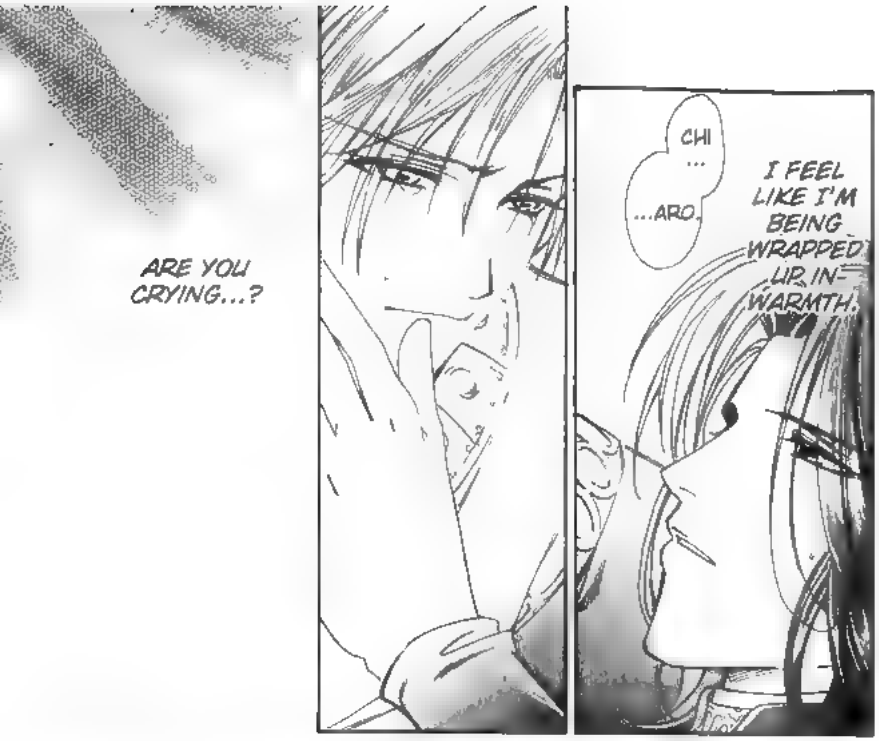
I'M NO LONGER WHO I USED TO BE.
JUST WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!?
THAT FORM, IT'S—
WHY WOULD YOU DO SOMETHING DANGEROUS LIKE THAT!?
IN ORDER TO CONQUER... THE EVIL...
...I ABSORBED IT INTO MY BODY!
I WON'T LET THEM DO AS THEY PLEASE.
...I CAN BE MYSELF.
AS LONG AS I'M CONTROLLING THE DEMONS WITHIN ME...
...IT'S *IMPOSSIBLE* TO CONTROL A FORCE THAT STRONG FOREVER.
EVEN IF IT'S HIM...
THAT MAKES NO SENSE!

IF YOU GET ANY CLOSER—
DON'T COME NEAR.

CESARE!
SNAP
SNAP
I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CONTROLS THIS BODY!
I WOULD RATHER BE DESTROYED BY THE DARKNESS THAN SUCCUMB TO IT!

STAY AWAY!
ACTUALLY, THAT FORM IS—
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO NOW.
THIS PROBLEM IS MINE AND MINE ALONE.
I LOST THE POWER TO SEAL AWAY THE DEMONIC FORCES.
NOW THEY ARE EATING ME FROM THE INSIDE OUT. THAT'S WHY I'M LIKE THIS.
!
STILL...
...I'M GOING TO SUPPRESS IT RIGHT NOW.
FOR SO SMALL A THING, I WONDER WHY MY SOUL SCREAMED WITH SUCH AGONY.
FOR ALL THIS...
...ALL I DID WAS REMOVE A SMALL PEBBLE FROM MY PATH.

RIP
GASP
CRUNCH
TEARING IT OFF HIMSELF!
THAT'S INSANE!
!


ARE YOU CRYING...?
CHI ...
...ARO.
I FEEL LIKE I'M BEING WRAPPED UP IN WARMTH.

HE'S LESS OF A WEIGHT THAN THE LITTLE GIRLS I KNEW IN MY YOUTH.
DO YOU...
...KNOW HOW LIGHT HE IS?
HE'S JUST UNCONSCIOUS.
HE'S OKAY.
DON'T TELL ME HE'S DEAD!

.....
!

LIFT
IT'S YOU!
JUAN!?
?
YOU'RE RIGHT...
GHE... SAA... REEE...

I COULD LAUGH.
EVEN THOUGH I SAID I'D KILL HIM...
...ALL I CAN DO IS BITE MY FINGERS AND LOOK ON.
HEY! YOU'RE LOOKING THE OTHER WAY!
NICCO-LO...
YOU CAN'T BEAR ALL OF ANOTHER MAN'S BURDENS.
THAT'S GOD'S DOMAIN.
RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS, CHIARO.
YOUR MERE PRESENCE IS A SALVE FOR HIS SOUL.
THESE TEARS THAT KNOW OF MY POWERLESSNESS...
I'M SURE THAT THOSE TEARS DIDN'T FLOW OUT OF SELF-PITY ALONE.
SHH!
BE QUIET. DON'T YOU HEAR SOMETHING STRANGE?
THAT IS YOUR GREATEST WEAPON.

SLASH
GYAH!
TREMBLE
ARE YOU OKAY, CHIARO!?
YEAH ...
!
THAT'S PRETTY DEEP! YOU SHOULD HURRY AND GET SOME AID—
I'M... I'M OKAY.
RIP
RIP
SUCH DEVOTION TO HIS HATRED FOR CESARE. HOW TENACIOUS
UH

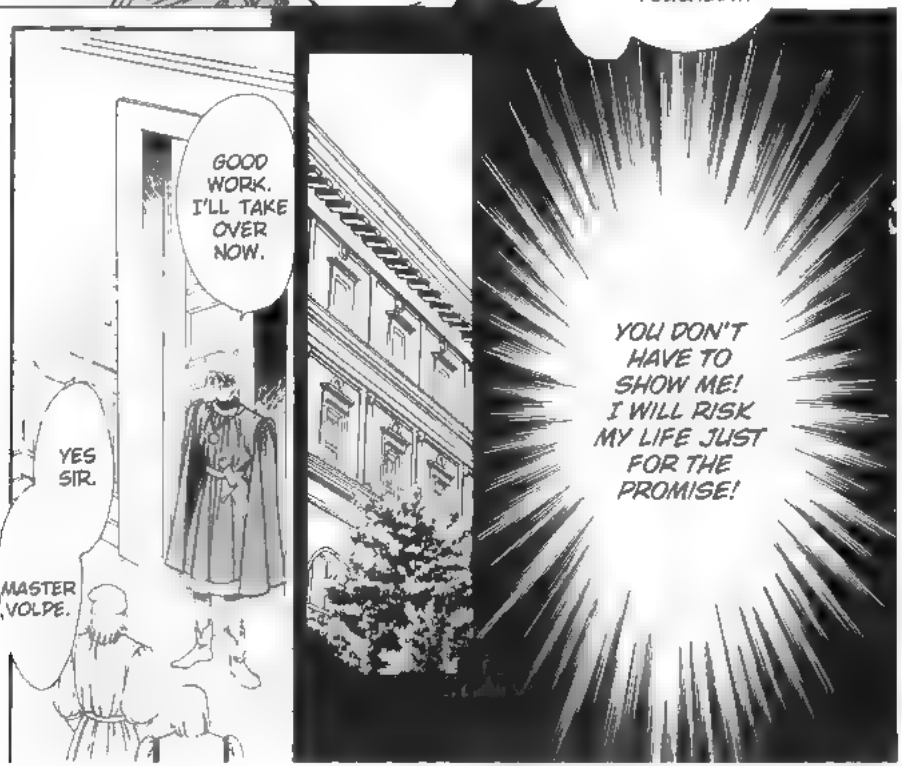
I'VE GOT A LATE START!
CHARGE
NOT GOOD! MY STANCE—
STAB
!
CHIARO!

IF WE DON'T CLEAN UP THIS MESS WHILE I STILL REMAIN CONSCIOUS...

THIS ISN'T GOOD. THE BLOOD WON'T STOP.

SO HERE YOU ARE. I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU!
!
AH. PERFECT TIMING!
TO SOME-WHERE SAFE.
BEFORE ANYBODY SEES HIM.
MORE IMPORT-ANTLY...
...WE SHOULD GET CESARE AS FAR AWAY FROM HERE AS POSSIBLE.

HIS FATE IS FINALLY ON THE MOVE.
I WILL SHOW YOU HOW BIG THE WORLD IS. NO PLACE SHALL GO UN-TOUCHED...
I WILL SHOW YOU...


GOOD WORK. I'LL TAKE OVER NOW.
YES SIR.
MASTER VOLPE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHOW ME! I WILL RISK MY LIFE JUST FOR THE PROMISE!

NO WAY!
YOU HAVE TOO MUCH FAITH IN YOUR BODY.
A WOUND LIKE THIS CAN HEAL ON ITS OWN.
I'LL BE SUSPECTED OF FOUL PLAY.
IT'S STOPPED BLEEDING FOR THE MOST PART BUT ..
...YOU REALLY SHOULD SEE A DOCTOR. IT'S PRETTY BAD.
JUST GO AWAY, MOTH. SHOO !

I CAN FORESEE THE UPROAR THIS WILL CAUSE.
SO HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO RETURN TO CESARE IN THIS STATE?
I MUST MAKE SURE NO SUSPICIOUS EYES TURN HIS WAY!
CHIARO!
JUAN WAS THE POPE'S FAVORED SON.

CESARE.
NO MATTER ...
...WHAT YOU ARE.
YOU ARE THE ONLY MASTER I SERVE.

!?
MASTER VOLPE, WHAT'RE YOU—!?
BUT
WHY DOES MASTER CESARE LOOK LIKE THAT?
WHAT HAP-PENED ?
SPLISH
-IDAW
FOR-GIVE ME
THIS IS ALL FOR HIS SAKE.

YOUR LIFE AND YOUR DEATH?
YOU MEAN TO SAY YOU DEVOTE THEM BOTH TO ME?
THE SWEET POISON THAT IS YOU.
IF THAT IS SO, THEN I HAVE ALREADY BEEN VIOLATED BY THE POISON THAT IS YOU.
YOU'LL GO TO HELL FOR THAT.
YOU KNOW THAT, VOLPE?
MY LIFE AND MY DEATH BELONG TO YOU!
YOU'LL DIE.
MY BLOOD IS POISONOUS.
I DON'T CARE.
BECAUSE MY ONLY GOD IS YOU.
YOU DO REALIZE THAT I'M MERELY A CARDINAL?
HMPH.
YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED TO JUAN.

WHERE IS JUAN?
BUT...
...THAT WILL SOON DISAPPEAR!
WHAT IS HE UP TO!?
HE KNOWS THAT HE'S TO ATTEND THE CORONATION CEREMONY IN NAPLES!
WITHOUT A TRACE...
SIRE..
HE HASN'T RETURNED HOME SINCE LADY VANOZZA'S BANQUET LAST NIGHT.
WHAT A TROUBLE-SOME BOY!
TELL THE PALACE BRIGADE I WANT THEM SEARCHING ROME FOR HIM.
PERHAPS HE WENT TO THAT PROSTITUTE OF HIS.

ENOUGH
TO FULFILL MY AMBITIONS...
NAPLES. I WAS TO TRAVEL THERE WITH JUAN.
...I MUST GO TO NAPLES ON BEHALF OF MY FATHER.
THERE HE WOULD HAVE GAINED THE LAND OF BENEVENTO AND A COURT RANK.
THERE'S NO LONGER A NEED TO FUSS OVER ME.
HOWEVER, JUAN IS NO MORE.
HE WAS AN IRRITA-TION...
...THAT VANISHED FROM THIS WORLD, TAKING WITH HIM THE WEIGHT THAT BORE DOWN ON ME SINCE CHILDHOOD.
ALL HE LEFT BEHIND ..
...WAS THIS SCAR.

!

HE STILL HASN'T BEEN FOUND!?
EITHER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, THIS IS BAD...
IT'S LONG PAST THE EVENING HOUR AND...
...WE HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANY WORD OF HIM.
DOUBLE THE TROOPS AND HAVE THEM SEARCH MORE THOROUGHLY!
YES SIR

SHOUT SHOUT
DO THEY HAVE TO MAKE SO MUCH NOISE SO LATE AT NIGHT?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW. THE POPE'S STUPID SON...
..HAS GONE MISSING.
IT'S LIKE A WAR!
THEY'VE EVEN CALLED IN SOLDIERS FROM SPAIN FOR THE SEARCH.
WHAT'S HAPPENED !?
KYAAH! WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?
HEY NOW! OUT OF THE WAY!
YOU'RE DISRUPTING OUR SEARCH!

HE HAD BEEN STABBED TO DEATH.
NO. BUT THEY'VE FOUND...
MASTER JUAN'S FOOTMAN.
HAS JUAN BEEN FOUND!?
!
YOUR HOLINESS!
WHAT IS IT?

HEY! I HEARD SOMETHING OVER THERE!
DAMN
I CAN'T MUSTER UP THE ENERGY
WOBBLE
!
RUSTLE
HELLO! IS THERE ANYONE THERE?
ZOOOM
I COULDN'T TELL IN THE DARK.
A HORSE!
AFTER IT!
WAS ANYBODY RIDING IT?
UH.
WAH!

AH...
YOU'RE STILL HERE?
NN...
I GUESS... ...I PASSED OUT FOR A WHILE.
I CAN'T LINGER HERE ANY LONGER.
JUST AS I THOUGHT
THIS HAS BECOME A SERIOUS MATTER.

OW OW OW...
WHERE AM I?
I'M SO PATHETIC!
SOME PIECE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY...
IT LOOKS FAMILIAR.
IT'S NO USE. I CAN'T STAY FOCUSED.
I'M SO... COLD. I WANT TO DRINK... WATER...
SO EVEN... I CAN...
...DIE, I GUESS.

GRAB
TREMBLE
THUMP
PHEW! ...
I'M SAFE FOR NOW.

!
CHIARO
!?
!?

FLAP
FLAP
CHIRP
CHIRP

THERE'S A SMALL STORAGE BUILDING NEAR HERE. NOBODY GOES THERE!
CHIARO!
GAH!
NO WONDER..!
SO IT WAS THE MONASTERY OF MY ANGEL..
I'M SORRY FOR SCARING YOU.
NO. I'LL GO NOW.
I'LL RAISE MY VOICE!
I GOT IT. I GOT IT.
Don't
!
I KNOW! I'LL GET SOME-BODY-
CHIARO! HOW-!
AAH! YOU'RE HURT BADLY! WHAT SHOULD I DO?
.....!
IF SOME-BODY... FOUND OUT...
...IT'D... BE... BAD...
PLEASE
DON'T TELL ANY-ONE...
BUT YOU DO NEED--
I UNDER-STAND.

MASTER JUAN'S BODY HAS BEEN RETRIEVED FROM THE SANDBANK OF THE TEVERE RIVER!
AAAAAAAAAAH!!

I'M SURE YOU'LL REGRET... .SAVING ME...
I'M NOT...THE KIND OF GUY YOU THINK I AM.
DON'T SPEAK!
JUST FOCUS ON WALKING.
SPLASH
SPLOOSH
YOUR GRACE!
YOUR HOLINESS!
AAH! IT'S—!
!
HM... ?

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
!
THE ONE WHO BROUGHT HIS HAND DOWN ON THEM... WAS MY FATHER.
WHEN I WAS STILL YOUNG...
...THAT POOR FATHER'S OWN FAMILY WAS MURDERED FOR POLITICAL REASONS.
KNOWING I WOULD INHERIT THE MASK OF THE ASSASSIN ...
THE MASK THAT HAD SERVED AS MY FAMILY'S LIVELIHOOD FOR ALL THOSE GENERA-TIONS.

CHILDREN MUSTN'T SWING SUCH THINGS AROUND.
CHIA-RO.
CHIA-RO!
THINGS THAT KILL PEOPLE ARE SAD THINGS.
PEOPLE MUSTN'T GO AGAINST THE WILL OF GOD, AND GOD GRANTS MERCY TO ALL MEN.
HOLY FATHER ...
I'VE FORGOTTEN HIS NAME.
BUT HE WAS ONE OF THE FEW IN SANT'ANGELO THAT KNEW OF OUR EXISTENCE.
AND SO HE ALWAYS SMILED WITH A SAD FACE.
BUT ...
...I HAVE TO FOLLOW IN MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS SOMEDAY.
I PROMISED MY FATHER I WOULD!

NO, I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
I... DON'T WANT TO DIE!
THUD

GRIP
I WANT TO SAVE YOU, CHIARO.
NO!
YOU'RE THE SON OF AN ASSASSIN.
SOMEDAY YOU TOO WILL KILL PEOPLE.
!
FATHER! WHY!?
BEFORE THAT, YOU HAVE TO DIE, CHIARO.
IT'S THE GREATEST MERCY I CAN SHOW YOU!
WHILE YOUR SOUL IS STILL INNOCENT OF SIN.
NO!

A DREAM ...?
WHERE AM I?
YOU'RE AWAKE ?
YOU'RE JUST LIKE AN ANIMAL, BEING ABLE TO SENSE SOMEONE'S PRESENCE LIKE THAT.
THAT'S RIGHT...I'M IN LUCREZIA'S MONASTERY.

SP...ASH
IN MY VISION THAT WAS STAINED RED WITH HIS BLOOD...
...I SAW TEARS ON THAT MAN'S CHEEK.
...THIS WAS THE ONLY PATH.
CLANG!
...AND TO SURVIVE...
EVEN SO...
...I WANTED TO LIVE.

IS THAT GIRL...?
UNDERSTOOD.
YES.
FOOD, YOU SAY...?
SOUP WOULD BE GOOD. WARM IT UP, PLEASE?
DON'T WORRY.
PANTACILIA WOULD NEVER TELL ANYONE ABOUT YOUR BEING HERE.
WHEN I COULDN'T TAKE CARE OF YOU, SHE TOOK MY PLACE BY YOUR BED.
I HAD TO RETURN TO THE VATICAN AT NEWS OF MY BROTHER'S DEATH.
!

MY LADY.
MY LADY.
IT'S NO USE THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SLEEP FOR THREE DAYS STRAIGHT.
DON'T TRY TO GET UP SO FAST.
IT'S OKAY. THAT'S MY TRUSTED FRIEND.
COME IN, PANTACILIA.
MY LADY!
THUD
MORE IMPORTANTLY, COULD YOU PREPARE SOME FOOD FOR HIM?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WARN ME.
I BROUGHT SOME FIREWOOD. AND—
EEK!

WHY...
...
WOULD YOU DO SUCH A THING?
IT'S TRUE.
YOU'RE LYING, RIGHT?
YOU COULDN'T HAVE...
NOTHING I SAY WILL CHANGE THE FACTS.
MY LIVELIHOOD IS BEING A GOD OF DEATH.
ARE YOU GOING TO THROW ME OUT NOW?

ON THE DAY THAT I FOUND YOU...
...JUAN'S BODY WAS PULLED OUT OF THE RIVER.
THEY STILL HAVEN'T FOUND THE ONE WHO KILLED HIM.
MY FATHER IS SEARCHING FOR HIM IN A FRENZY.
IT COULDN'T BE...
THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU THAT YOU'D REGRET SAVING ME.

WORRYING OVER THE GUY WHO KILLED YOUR BROTHER... WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?

AH!
BAM
LADY LUCREZIA...
EEK!
SO THIS TIME IT'S MY TURN TO SAVE YOU!!
YOU'RE ALWAYS SAVING ME.
I WILL NOT GET OUT OF THE WAY!
I DON'T GET YOU AT ALL...
NOW OUTTA THE WAY.
LOOK, YOUR HAND'S STILL BURNING UP.
GET BACK TO BED!

AH!
THE WOUND'S NOT YET CLOSED UP.
YOU SHOULDN'T MOVE.
I'M GRATE-FUL.
SHAKE
!
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING IN THIS CONDITION?
THE TOWN'S CRAWLING WITH SEARCH PARTIES.
I...
...WON'T APPEAR HERE EVER AGAIN.

SOME TROOPS FROM THE VATICAN CAME TO THE MONASTERY
PLEASE, PANTACILIA. YOU MUSTN'T SPEAK OF HIM TO ANYONE ELSE.
WHY ARE YOU SO WILLING TO PROTECT THIS MAN?
I DON'T KNOW.
I THINK WHAT HAPPENED TO JUAN WAS TERRIFYING.
BUT I CAN'T JUST LEAVE THIS MAN TO HIS FATE.

PANTA-CILIA!!
OH, PARDON ME.
That's what you get for standing there.
CRACK
CRACK
WELL...
IF YOU WANTED TO STOP HIM ANYWAY, IT WAS GOOD TIMING ON MY PART.
...
UM... HOW IS CHIARO'S CONDI-TION?
His wound is scary
THERE SEEMS TO BE A NEW CRACK IN HIS RIBS.
BUT IT'S NO DANGER TO HIS LIFE.
IN ANY CASE, THIS IS THE LIMIT OF HIS BODY'S PHYSICAL STRENGTH
WE SHOULD LET HIM GET PLENTY OF REST.
How'd he move around with such a high fever?
CHIARO.

TO THIS VERY DAY THE HOT THOUGHTS THAT BURNED THIS BODY... WERE OF ONE MAN.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I PRAYED TO GOD, IT WAS A WOUND THAT WOULD NOT HEAL, POURING FORTH BLOOD I COULD NOT CONTROL.
THAT IS UP TO YOUR HEART TO DECIDE.
MY HEART...
PAN?
CAN I CAST ASIDE THESE FEELINGS AND FINALLY LIVE IN PEACE!?

IT MAY BE A SIGN...
DOES THAT MEAN... I CAN BE RELIEVED OF THIS SUFFERING AT LAST?
PAN...!
REGARDLESS...
...I THINK IT'S A GOOD SIGN THAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT OTHER MEN.

MUST I REPORT MY EVERY MOVE TO YOU,
VOLPE ?
MASTER CESARE,
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

PLEASE RETURN AT ONCE TO THE VATICAN.
THAT'S NOT IT.
HIS HOLINESS HAS CALLED FOR A MEETING OF THE CARDINALS.

A MEETING OF THE CARDINALS? AT A TIME LIKE THIS?

DASH

SIR..
...I HOPE IT IS NOT YOUR INTENTION TO AGGRAVATE THIS FRAGILE SITUATION
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
CLICK
CLICK
YES SIR.
ENOUGH.
GO TO THE WAITING ROOM.

THIS MAY SEEM INTRUSIVE, BUT ROME IS FILLED WITH TENSION.
PLEASE AVOID GOING OUT ALONE.
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT CHIARO, BUT...
...WE ARE PUTTING ALL OUR EFFORT INTO FINDING HIM.
JUST A LITTLE LONGER--
IT'S BEEN A WEEK SINCE CHIARO VANISHED! WITHOUT A CLUE AS TO WHERE OR WHY!
AND YOU'RE TELLING ME TO SIT PATIENTLY AND WAIT!?
JUST A LITTLE LONGER!? JUST A LITTLE LONGER UNTIL WHAT!?

I SEE ALL AND KNOW ALL...
WHERE'S CHIARO!?
SO YOUR BODY'S BETTER ALREADY?
YOU DO KNOW, DON'T YOU!
COOL YOUR HEAD BEFORE YOU TALK.
SO THAT IS...
...A GIVEN.
MORE IMPORTANTLY
..WHAT HAPPENED TO CHIARO? YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU?
YOU OF ALL PEOPLE WOULD KNOW
THE ROMAN TROOPS ARE HUNTING FOR JUAN'S MURDERER. DO YOU THINK YOU'D BE DOING CHIARO A FAVOR BY DRAWING ATTENTION TO HIM?
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO NOT CONSIDER WHY CHIARO'S CHOSEN TO HIDE AWAY.
THEN ...
...HE'S ALIVE!?

WHAT'S THE MATTER?
YOU SEEM UNUSUALLY DISTRACTED.
CALM DOWN. I MUST DETACH MYSELF FROM MY THOUGHTS.
NICCOLO!
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN!?
WHERE, INDEED. TAKING CARE OF A FEW THINGS.
I RETURNED TO MY HOMETOWN OF FLORENCE.
THERE ARE OTHER THINGS I SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT.

YOU ARE A RIVER THAT NEVER STOPS.
THE "DEMONIC FORCE" CHOOSES THE FATE... OF HUMANS THAT IS.
ALL OF US, MORE OR LESS, ARE AROUSED...
...BY SOME POWERFUL URGE TO EXCEED HUMAN INTELLECT. WE LIVE BY THIS URGE.
THE FIGURE OF A ROYAL MAN BATHED IN BLOOD, STANDING ALOOF IN THE MIDST OF A SEA OF CORPSES.
MY FIRST SIGHT OF YOU WAS WHEN THOSE DEMONIC FORCES WERE GRANTED THE HARBOR OF YOUR BODY.
THIS EVEN...
..APPLIES TO ME, AS I HAVE LATELY REALIZED.
I WAS CHOSEN TO GAZE AT YOU.

HE'LL COME BACK. THERE'S NO NEED TO PANIC.
IT'LL TAKE SOME TIME TO PREPARE FOR THE OCCASION...
DO YOU SENSE HIS DEATH?
NO...
OCCA-SION...?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN... OCCASION?
THE OCCASION OF YOUR EXCEEDING HUMAN INTELLIGENCE.
YES, BUT..
THAT'S WHY I CALLED ON YOU TODAY.
!?
IF YOU'RE JUST GOING TO SAY INCOMPRE-HENSIBLE THINGS, THEN GO.
IF CHIARO'S ALIVE, THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO PLAY WORD GAMES WITH YOU

AGAIN WITH THE "I SEE ALL, I KNOW ALL" BIT?
FLORENCE AGAIN...
I'M CONSIDERING..
...MY HOMETOWN AS THE PLACE TO DO MY WRITING.
FOR A SHORT WHILE, THAT IS SOON ENOUGH
...I'LL BE SUCKED ONCE AGAIN INTO THE BLACK UNDERCURRENT THAT ALWAYS CARRIES ME TO YOU.
FLORENCE IS THE BEST PLACE TO VIEW ITALY'S VAST AND LANDSCAPE. EVERYTHING ELSE.
NO.
THIS IS ALSO SOMETHING I DESIRE.
I HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR YOU.
IF I DIDN'T, YOU WOULDN'T BE THE SORT WHO COULD CONTROL DEMONS WRITHING INSIDE YOU.

WITH THESE HANDS I RECORD ALL YOUR MIRACLES.
THAT TYRANT IS WHO YOU ARE.
SO THAT YOUR POISON MAY PASS ON TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.
MAKING TOO MUCH OF ME WILL LEAD TO TROUBLE. I AM NO MORE THAN A MERE PRIEST.
THOUGH I HAVE ONE LAST THING TO TELL YOU.
AND SO...
...I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE.
AND I AM NO MORE THAN A MERE WIZARD

MURMUR
WHAT A GREAT GRIEF TO SUFFER FROM.
PITIFUL. ALL HIS FEARS ARE RETURNING TO HIM.
LOSING HIS BELOVED SON.
WHAT ELSE COULD YOU EXPECT?
AT THE LATEST ASSEMBLY, ALEXANDER VI PROMISED TO END CORRUPTION...
..WITH SWEEPING CHANGES TO THE CHURCH, INCLUDING THE ELIMINATION OF NEPOTISM.
HM.
WE'LL SEE IF SUCH THINGS CONTINUE.
BUT THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY.

MY LAST NAME IS...
FAREWELL, FOR NOW.
NICCOLO
...MACHIAVELLI. I'M CALLED NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI.
NEXT TIME WE MEET, PLEASE ADDRESS ME BY MY FULL NAME.
Niccolo Machiavelli: In the future, he would be the author of "The Prince" -- a text centering around the concept of an autocratic government, something that came to be known as "Machiavellism." His words would make him infamous throughout the world.
But this is not the future...

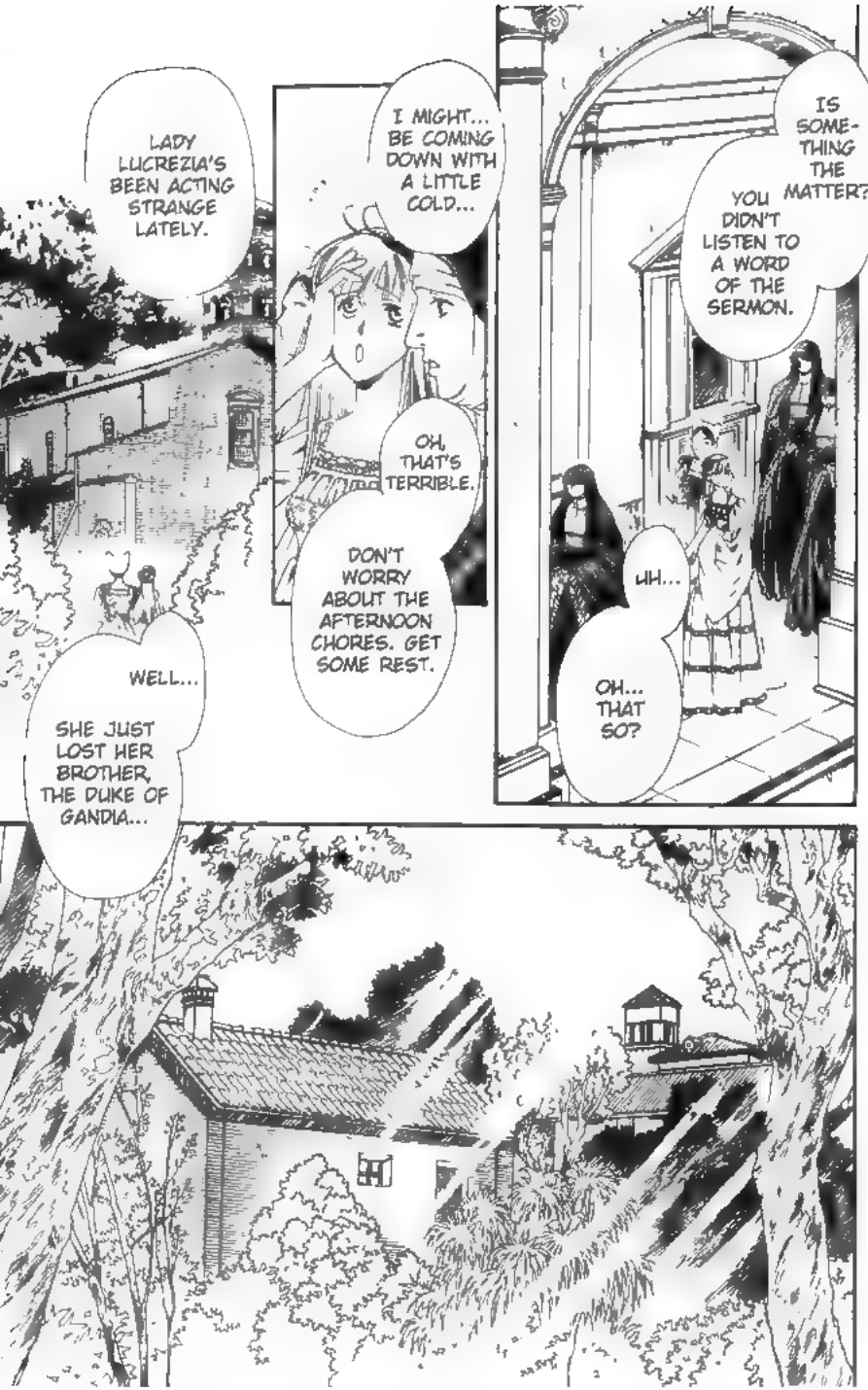
VANO...
!?
!?

FETCH THE MESSENGER
YES.
CARDINAL ROVERE.
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT MY PROSPECTS OF RETURNING TO ITALY ARE, OF BEING SETTLED IN ROME.
I'VE GROWN BORED OF MY REFUGE AT AVIGNON.
SEND OUR CONDOLENCES TO THE POPE IMMEDIATELY.
...TO FINISH OFF THOSE CUNNING BORGIAS...
NO MATTER HOW MENIAL MY POSITION THERE MAY BE, I MUST RETURN...

WHEN WILL THIS UPROAR FINALLY BE SETTLED?
I'VE HEARD THE LORD OF PESARO IS ALSO A SUSPECT...
...AND IS DESPERATE TO SHAKE OFF ALL SUSPICIONS.
THAT'S BECAUSE SIGNOR JUAN HAD PLENTY OF ENEMIES.
CARDINAL ASCANIO SFORZA ..
THE POPE IS WILLING TO CUT EVERY STEM OF GRASS...
...IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES TO FIND THE MURDERER OF OUR DUKE OF GANDIA.

HIS HOLINESS...
...CANCELLED THE INVESTIGATION FOR SIGNOR JUAN'S MURDERER.

SLIP
.....
YOU'RE ... RIGHT.
YOUR SUFFERING, YOUR SADNESS... ALL OF IT.
NOW THEN ...
...FORGET ABOUT EVERY-THING


LADY LUCREZIA'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE LATELY.
WELL... SHE JUST LOST HER BROTHER, THE DUKE OF GANDIA...
I MIGHT... BE COMING DOWN WITH A LITTLE COLD...
OH, THAT'S TERRIBLE.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE AFTERNOON CHORES. GET SOME REST.
IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?
YOU DIDN'T LISTEN TO A WORD OF THE SERMON.
UH...
OH... THAT SO?

I HEARD.
SOMETHING HAPPENED, DIDN'T IT?
MAYBE...

I'M OKAY. I'M JUST A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED IN MYSELF...
I REALLY AM OF NO HELP AT ALL...
I'M SORRY, IT'S MY FAULT.
IT WAS JUST A LITTLE BLOOD.
SHEESH.
ONE PATIENT'S ENOUGH FOR ME TO LOOK AFTER ALREADY.
I WAS AFRAID FOR A WHILE THAT YOU'D DIE...
BUT...
...I'M GLAD YOU'RE FEELING BETTER.

FRET
FRET
YOU TWO HAVE TAKEN COMPLETE CARE OF ME...
PAN, I CAN HELP, TOO.
I'M GOING TO CHANGE THE BANDAGES.
YOUR WOUND HAS HEALED FASTER THAN I THOUGHT.
TWO OR THREE DAYS AND YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE ABOUT AGAIN.
Just stay where you are. You'll get my way.
HNGH!
AT THIS POINT, YOUR INNARDS SHOULDN'T FALL OUT, SO THAT'S GOOD.
MY LADY!?
FAINT

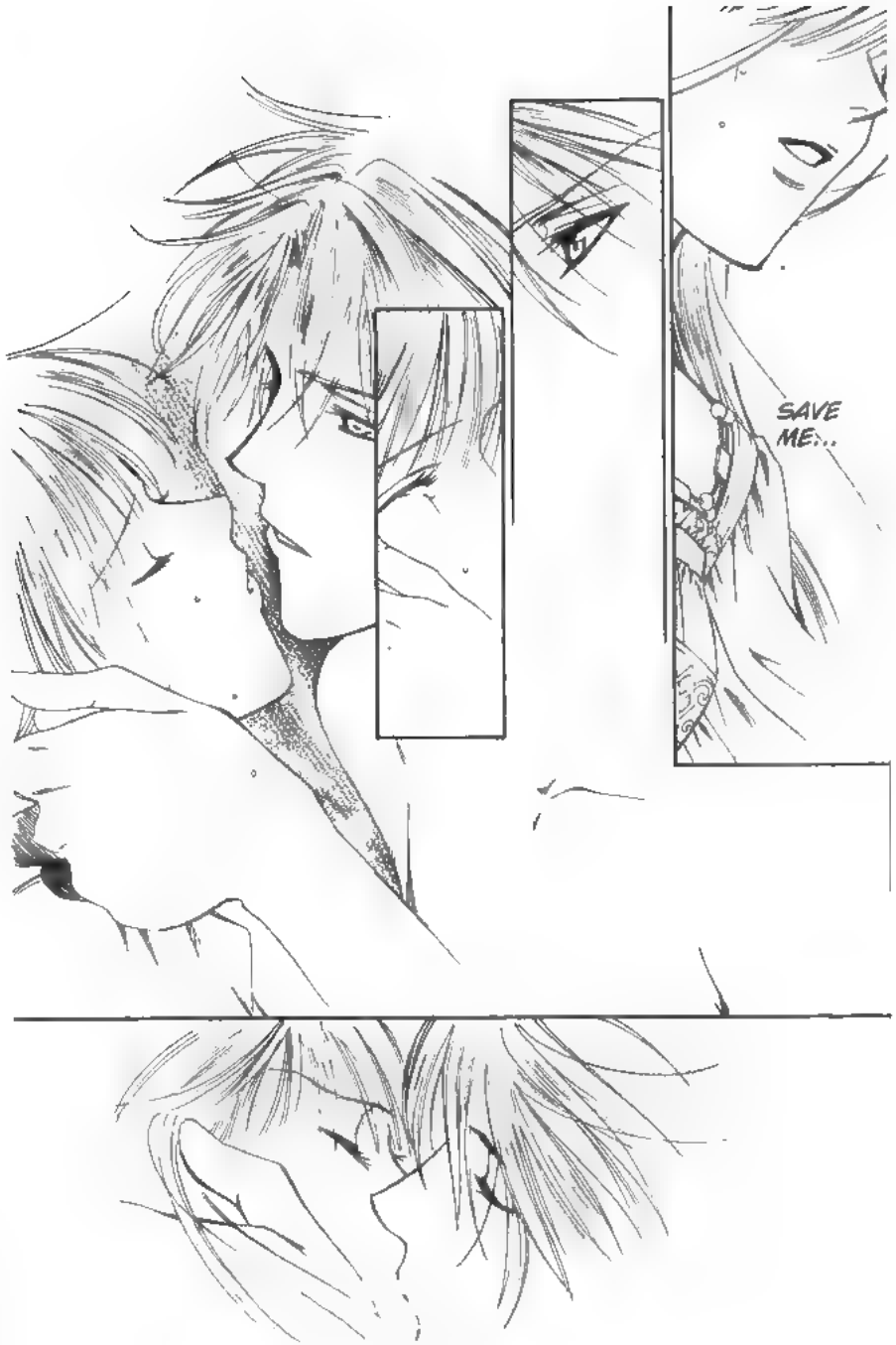
!?
SHUT
WHEN YOU CONFESSED TO HAVING KILLED JUAN...
...I BARELY FLINCHED, REMEMBER?
I'VE COMMITTED AN EVEN GREATER SIN THAN YOU...
...WHICH I WAS FORCED TO FACE BECAUSE OF JUAN'S DEATH ..
WHAT DO YOU THINK MY MIND WAS ON...
...WHEN I WAS AT HIS FUNERAL?
AFTER ALL...
...MY HEART IS A MOST DIRTY THING ..

I'LL GO GET SOME WATER.
TO FLING COMPLIMENTS ABOUT WITH SUCH CASUALNESS... COULD HE BE SINCERE?
UP CLOSE LIKE THIS, YOU LOOK LIKE THE VIRGIN MARY.
YOU REALLY ARE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.
I'M MOVED BY YOU
YOU'RE STARING AT ME.
Blush
I...
...AM NO VIRGIN MARY...
TURN
MY LADY?

JUST THE BREEZE THAT STIRRED WHEN HE PASSED ME!..
...CAUSED MY HEART TO CRY OUT...
...AND BEAT SO HARD IT BECAME PAINFUL.
EVEN THOUGH JUAN WAS LYING COLD NEARBY...
I'M TERRIFIED OF MYSELF, OF THIS... THIS--!
GOD HAS PUNISHED ME.
I SAW HIM THERE. IT HAD BEEN...
...SO LONG...
I THOUGHT I HAD SEALED AWAY THE PASSION I FEEL FOR THIS MAN WHOM I LOVE MORE THAN ANY OTHER.

I WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO BE WITH THAT MAN.
BUT I WILL ALWAYS BE RULED BY THESE POWERFUL EMOTIONS...!
BECAUSE THAT MAN IS MY—
LUCREZIA!
THAT'S ENOUGH.
STOP HURTING YOURSELF LIKE THIS.

AT THAT MOMENT... I COULD THINK OF NOTHING...
...BUT THE COMFORTING KISS WE WERE BESTOWING UPON EACH OTHER.
WHEN THE CORNER OF MY EYE CAUGHT THE SPARKLING OF HER TEARS, I SAW OUR SHADOWS MELDING INTO ONE.


SAVE ME...

KA-BOOM!!!
BOOM
I WONDER IF THAT'S WHY .. ...THE DIVINE ANGER OF THIS THUNDER SEEMS PLEASANT TO ME.
I HEAR IT WAS A DAY LIKE THIS... .. THAT I WAS BORN ON.
THE THUN-DER... ..IS AWFULLY CLOSE.

LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO RAIN.
HMM... I HOPE IT'S JUST A PASSING SHOWER.
WHAT POOR LUCK TO BE GOING TO NAPLES ON A DAY LIKE THIS.
MASTER CESARE.
YOUR DEPARTURE PREPARA-TIONS HAVE BEEN MADE.

WHY?
AM I ACTING ODDLY?
A LITTLE ...
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
IF SO, MY MOTHER AND I SHOULD HAVE BEEN PIERCED WITH LIGHTNING ON THE DAY OF MY BIRTH.
HEH ...
HA HA HA HA...
YOU'RE FRANK
flick...
THAT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN TAKING ACTION.
IF IT'S ABOUT CHIARO...
...HE'LL RETURN.

HOW IRONIC. IN ORDER TO BE THE HIGHEST SERVANT OF GOD..
...YOU BROUGHT FORTH WITH YOUR OWN HAND A CREATURE FROM HELL.
IF I AM NOT A BLESSING FROM HEAVEN, LIKE MOST CHILDREN...
IF I AM FROM HEAVEN... MORE LIKE FROM GOD HIMSELF...
...THEN ISN'T MY EXISTENCE IN THIS WORLD INCONGRUOUS?
...THEN JUST WHAT AM I?

GASP
NG!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, VOLPE!?
EVEN AT A TIME LIKE THIS, WHEN YOU'RE DEPARTING FOR NAPLES ...
THAT MAN IS ALWAYS CONFUSING YOUR HEART.
!
BANG
VOLPE!
...JUST AS THOUGH ...!
HALF OF YOUR MIND IS CONSTANTLY CHASING THAT MAN'S SHADOW...
THIS IS...!?
LET GO!
SLAP

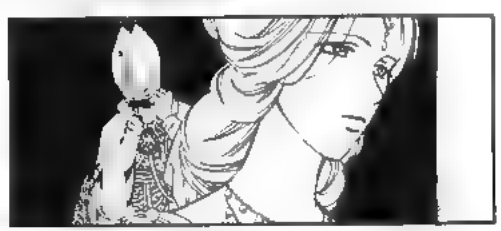
IT SHOOK ME HOW WORRIED HE WAS ABOUT CHIARO'S WELL-BEING, BUT NOW...
DOES HE MEAN THAT...HE'S SLOWLY, BUT SURELY, TRANS-FORMING...
...AND THAT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN CURE HIM OF THIS...IS THAT MAN?
WITH THAT BODY
...IT'S AN IMPOSSIBILITY TO GO TO NAPLES.
I WAS THOROUGHLY SURPRISED BY THIS.
TO THINK THAT I WAS SO DEPENDENT ON CHIARO...
IT IS...
WITHOUT HIM, THE DEMONS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY EVERY WEAKNESS... TAKING POSSESSION OF MY BODY INCH BY INCH.
CHIARO HAD IN HIM THE POWER TO SUPPRESS THE DEMONS WITHIN ME.
AS LONG AS I CAN KEEP MY HEART TRANQUIL, THE DEMONIC FORCES WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE CONTROL.
ARE YOU SAYING THAT FROM NOW ON I SHOULD CLING TO CHIARO?
VOLPE.
IF IT WERE FOUND OUT, THERE'D BE NO END OF TROUBLE FROM IT.
NO, I'LL BE FINE.
THE TRANS-FORMATION'S STOPPED FOR NOW. IF I CAN KEEP MY LEFT HAND FROM BEING SEEN, I'LL MANAGE.

YOUR HAND...
HOW LONG!?
IT .. COULDN'T BE..
!

STRIDE
YOU'RE TESTING YOURSELF ...
THAT'S WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO.
YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'RE ASKING YOURSELF THOSE WORDS.
AN EXISTENCE THAT TRANSCENDS HUMANS, EVIL, GOD...ALL OF IT... A MASTER WHO WIELDS ABSOLUTE "POWER" IS THE TRUE KING THAT I AM SEARCHING FOR.
...I WOULD CONSIDER THAT MOVE THE CORRECT ONE.
EVEN IF YOU HAD TO HAND OVER YOUR BODY TO HELL AS COMPENSATION...
HAHAHA

HOW... .. CAN YOU SAY THAT SO DEFINITELY?
...I'M COMPLETELY TAKEN OVER BY THEM, WHO I AM WILL VANISH.
THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.
IF BY ANY CHANCE...
BECAUSE I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LETTING IT HAPPEN.
DO YOU DESIRE TO FOLLOW A MASTER WHO CANNOT EVEN CONTROL HIMSELF!?

...THAT I AM WEAK AND FRAGILE.
VOLPE CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME.
THIS HAND IS MORE THAN ENOUGH PROOF..
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
IT'S NOTHING...
THROB



EVEN IF IT MEANT THAT BEAUTIFUL BODY WOULD TRANSFORM INTO SOME CREATURE I WOULDNEVER SEE AGAIN.

GO BACK.
THE NUNS WILL BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
I'LL BE FINE.
!
FINE I'LL GIVE THEM THE USUAL STORY
SHAKE
SHAKE
LUCREZIA.
DASH
!

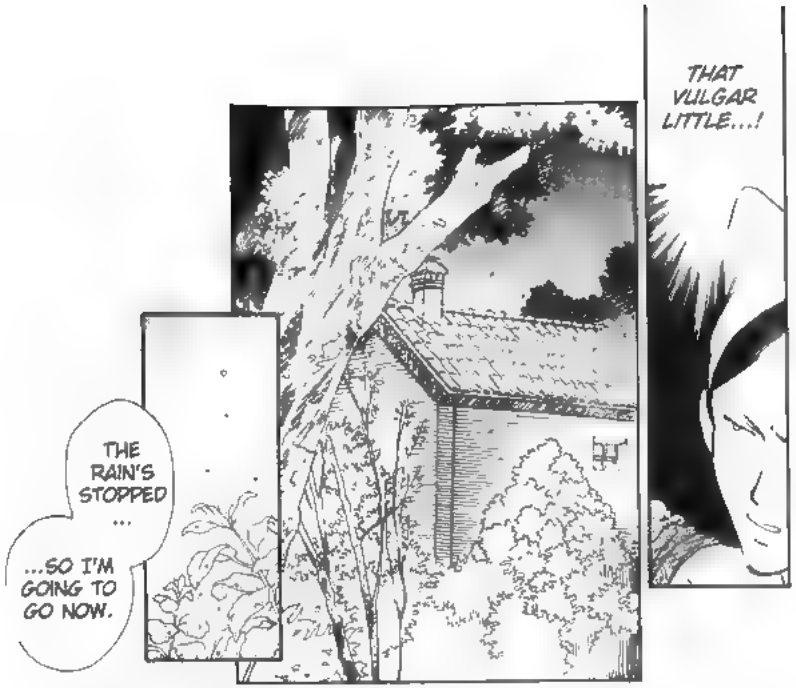
...I MUST DRAW OUT THE SUPREME RULER THAT IS WITHIN ME.
THAT'S WHY...
SSSSSH
THE RAIN'S GOTTEN HEAVY.
I'M RETURNING TO THE MONASTERY. WHAT WILL YOU DO, MY LADY?
OH.
UH...

WITH MY HUSBAND... WITH GIOVANNI..
...I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING. IT WAS JUST A MARRIAGE OF POLITICAL CONVENIENCE.
I WOULDN'T LET MYSELF BE TOUCHED BY ANYONE I DIDN'T WANT! I'D RATHER DIE FIRST!
!
SO...
...IF ANYONE WERE TO FEEL REGRET, IT WOULD BE YOU, CHIARO.
YOU WERE SO KIND...
...AND FELT SO BAD FOR ME..
ARE YOU...
...REGRETTING?
IT WAS YOUR FIRST TIME, WASN'T IT?
SINCE YOU'D BEEN MARRIED, I WAS SURE YOU'D ALREADY...
SILLY.
YOU THINK I'D DO WHAT WE DID BECAUSE I FELT BAD FOR YOU?

SPLISH
!?
WHO...
WHO ARE YOU!?
YOU'RE LADY LUCREZIA'S ATTENDANT, AREN'T YOU?
WHERE IS THE LADY NOW?
EXCUSE ME.
I'M PEDRO CALDERON. BUT CALL ME IL PEROTTO.
..I JUST THOUGHT I'D INTRODUCE MYSELF.
SINCE I WAS ORDERED TO SERVE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THIS MONASTERY AND THE VATICAN ..
JUST LIKE A PARROT!
AND WHAT EXACTLY DOES A PARROT WANT WITH MY LADY?
This area is off-limits to men
SHE'S 18 NOW, ISN'T SHE? SHE MUST HAVE DEVELOPED INTO A FINE WOMAN
SMILE
I HAVEN'T SEEN LADY LUCREZIA IN YEARS.
YOU COME FROM THE VATICAN?

YOUR WOUND WILL OPEN AGAIN!
HOW CAN I...
...WORRY ABOUT THAT?
IT'S TIMES LIKE THESE THAT VAST PROPERTIES ARE A NUISANCE.
I'M STILL ONLY HALFWAY THERE.
SSSSH
IT'S LIKE SOMEONE DUMPED A BUCKET OF WATER ON ME
I'M ALL SOPPING WET ALREADY!
Need shelter! Need shelter!

GRIN
I WAS JUST PRE-TENDING TO BE ASLEEP
HEY!
EEK!


THAT VULGAR LITTLE...!
THE RAIN'S STOPPED ...
...SO I'M GOING TO GO NOW.

ZZZ.

HIS FACE WHEN HE'S ASLEEP LOOKS LIKE A CHILD'S.
Hee hee

HE WAS VERY PERSISTENT ABOUT WANTING TO MEET YOU.
I HAD TO FORCE HIM TO RETURN TO HIS QUARTERS.
MY.
THEN I'LL MEET HIM.
SO THAT COULDN'T BE IT.
NO.
HIS HOLINESS PERSONALLY ORDERED A HALT TO THE INVESTIGATION...
YOU CAN'T APPEAR IN PUBLIC WITH THAT FLUSHED FACE.
AH.

SMIRK
PEDRO CALDERON?
YES, I KNOW OF HIM.
HE WAS ONE OF MY FATHER'S CHAMBER-LAINS...
WAH!
YOU DON'T THINK HE CAME HERE IN SEARCH OF CHIARO, DO YOU!?

THAT CHAMBERLAIN PEDRO OR WHATEVER IT WAS...
IS MY LADY'S BODYGUARD AS IT WERE, EH?
WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL.
YEAH ...
NOW...
...INTEREST IN BEING LUCREZIA'S NEXT HUSBAND IS VERY HIGH. EVERY DAY, MEN COME TO THE POPE'S RESIDENCE TO SOUND OUT THE SITUATION.
NOW AS PART OF THE DELIBERATIONS REGARDING THE DIVORCE...
.. IT SEEMS YOU WILL BE COMMUNICATING WITH THE POPE IN SECRET THROUGH PEDRO.
I know. Tomorrow I'll bring Chiara some plums from the orchard.
YOU'RE STILL SO YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL!
AND HOLD A UNIQUE POSITION AS THE POPE'S DAUGHTER.
FLAP
FLAP

OH?
GLOW
PANTACILIA, I HATE YOU!
WH...
OH NO, I'M ALL RED?
I'M JUST KIDDING.
YOUR EMOTIONS REACH YOUR FACE SO QUICKLY, LADY.
AHEM
ANYWAY, THE MOVEMENT TO FORMALLY DIVORCE YOU FROM THE LORD OF PESARO IS MOVING ALONG QUICKLY AT THE VATICAN.
THEN ...
...I NO LONGER HAVE TO RETURN TO THAT REGION ANY MORE!?
I CAN REMAIN HERE FOR GOOD...
. .NEVER BEING USED BY OTHERS. . GETTING TO LIVE IN PEACE!?
POOR CHILD...
THAT'S... RIGHT

LEAP
NO NEED TO BE ALARMED. IT'S ME.
THAT CONDITIONED RESPONSE... I'M NOT SURPRISED.
!
I'M AFRAID I'VE COME TO SNUFF OUT MY LADY'S HAPPINESS.
HUH !?
UNDERSTAND, CHIARO? YOU MUST LEAVE HERE NOW.
THERE'S SOMEONE SNIFFING AROUND LUCREZIA.
WHAT'S UP? IT'S NOT YET NIGHTFALL.
OH, IT'S YOU PANTACILIA.

..IT'S OVER-GROWING WITH FRUIT
MY LADY, THAT BRANCH THERE..
AH.
WAIT! IT HURTS WHEN YOU PULL SO!
PEDRO...
RUSTLE
I HADN'T HEARD THAT HE'D BE COMING
WHAT IS IT? THAT MAN GIVES ME A VERY BAD FEELING.

SO VERY... CRUEL.
SHE'S NOT SOME HEARTLESS DOLL.
YOU MUSTN'T BE CAUGHT.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BRING A SMILE TO THAT GIRL'S FACE.
NOW IM-PRESS ME.

YOU KILLED SIGNOR JUAN.
SO NATURALLY BLAME WILL FALL ON MISTRESS LUCREZIA FOR SHIELDING YOU.
IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THAT GUY FIGURES THINGS OUT. BEFORE THEN—
REMAR-RIED...?
BUT SHE'S STILL MARRIED TO THAT PESARO GUY—
TO THE BORGIA FAMILY HE'S ALREADY LOST HIS USE.
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WITH MARRIAGES OF POLITICAL CONVENI-ENCE.
MISTRESS LUCREZIA WILL VERY SOON BE REMARRIED.
UNTIL THAT HAPPENS, WE MUST KEEP HER LIKE A CAGED BIRD.
THAT GUY? WHO?
THE POPE'S CHAMBERLAIN A SHADY CHARACTER.
THOUGH I CAN'T DENY HE'S GOOD-LOOKING.
I...
...WANTED TO SEE HER SMILING FACE...
SO THIS IS...
...SO VERY...

PLEASE TELL THE LADY THIS FOR ME.
"THANK YOU."
What's up with that body language!?
It's hiding my embarrassment
Eek
What are you a kid!?
GYIII
This panel has a ghoulish air
...I'M SURE I WILL COME TO SEE HER AGAIN...
...SO DON'T WORRY. TELL HER THAT, OKAY!?
AND...
...NOT TO SOUND COCKY OR ANYTHING, BUT...

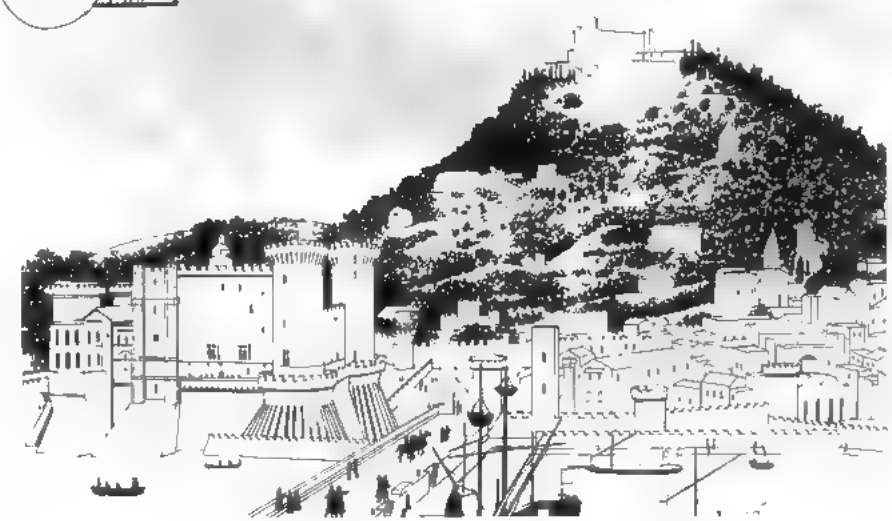
IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, THERE'S AN INN WHERE I AM WELL KNOWN.
IF YOU GIVE THEM MY NAME, THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.
SHEESH. EASIER SAID THAN DONE
IN TRUTH, YOUR BODY CAN'T YET RIDE A HORSE...SO JUST TRY NOT TO FAINT.
SO A NIGHT FLIGHT, HUH?
QUIT COMPLAIN-ING.
IT WASN'T EASY READYING THE HORSE FOR YOU, YOU KNOW.
I OWE YOU A LOT.
YOU REALLY ARE A GOOD PERSON.
I'M PUT AT EASE KNOWING THE VATICAN'S SEARCH HAS CEASED.
THOUGH BECAUSE I'M A ROMAN, I HAVE NO DOUBT I COULD MAKE MY WAY THROUGH EVERY BACK ALLEY IF I HAD TO!
CHIARO.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF PERSON YOU ARE, BUT IF YOU CAST ASIDE MY LADY, I WON'T LET YOU GET AWAY WITH IT.

NO!
NO!!
SAN-CIA..
WAH!
AAW, THAT WENCH HAS A CUTE FACE.
YOU TRULY WILL BE GOOD, LUCREZIA.
WELL.
SHE'S BEEN ORDERED BY HIS HOLINESS TO LEAVE FOR NAPLES. SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO LIKE THE IDEA.
WHAT'S WRONG, SANCIA?
PERK
AND YOUR LITTLE BROTHER WILL BE COMING.
WHAT WAS HIS NAME? OH! ALFONSO..
BUT SANCIA ...
NAPLES IS THE CITY YOU WERE BORN IN.
IT'S REPUL-SIVE!
THE POPE'S GOING TO BE REPRESENTED BY THAT MAN!
I AM NOT GOING TO THE CORONA-TION!

CREAK
.....
IT'S OKAY.
CHIARO...
LET US HAVE FAITH IN HIM...
...AND WAIT.
THAT MAN IS AN EVEN BETTER MAN THAN I THOUGHT.

WOW!
I HAD TO COME.
JUST WHAT I EXPECTED FOR A CORONATION CELEBRATION! EVERYONE'S SO FULL OF LIFE!
THAT'S BECAUSE POWERFUL FAMILIES FROM FAR AND WIDE HAVE GATHERED HERE
CESARE MUST BE AT THE ROYAL PALACE.
ALFONSO!
L...
LET'S GET GOING!!
WHAT IS IT, SANCIA?
AH! WAIT ...!

I'D FORGOTTEN.
I'LL BE FORCED TO SEE THAT CHILD AGAIN!
SANCIA ...?
SIGNORA SANCIA DOESN'T GET ALONG WITH SIGNOR ALFONSO.
EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE SIBLINGS?
HM.
CESARE AND JUAN WERE LIKE THAT TOO...
Uuuuh
THAT'S REALLY TOUGH.
THAT SITUATION WAS A LITTLE DIFFERENT ...


Naples

THROB
IT'S BOILING WITHIN MY BODY... A MOST REPUL-SIVE PAIN.
UGH
AAH!
WHY MUST THIS BE...?
THE POISON'S SEEPING INTO MY SOUL...

HAVE YOU COME FOR, VOLPE?
WHAT
SIGNOR JOFRE AND SIGNORA SANCIA HAVE COME TO GREET YOU.
IT SEEMS YOU ARE IN QUITE A BIT OF PAIN.
IN THAT STATE, CAN YOU REALLY HOLD THE CORONATION CEREMONY IN TWO DAYS?
FWAP

IT'S NOTHING.
NOTH-ING.
I JUST THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE I KNEW...
?
WHAT HAP-PENED?
OOH...

SIG-NORA SANCIA
SANCIA!
AAAAAH!!
HOW IS IT SEEING NAPLES...
...AFTER SO LONG, SANCIA?
CALL FOR A DOCTOR! HURRY!
SCURRY
SCURRY

GULP
STEP

!
HOW DID YOU...
LISTEN, SANCIA. WHAT YOU SAW EARLIER WAS A DREAM.. THAT'S ALL.
YOU MUSTN'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT.
CESARE!
DON'T MAKE A NOISE.
!!
HIS HAND...
IF YOU DO...
...I'LL MAKE LOVE TO YOU JUST AS I DID BEFORE.

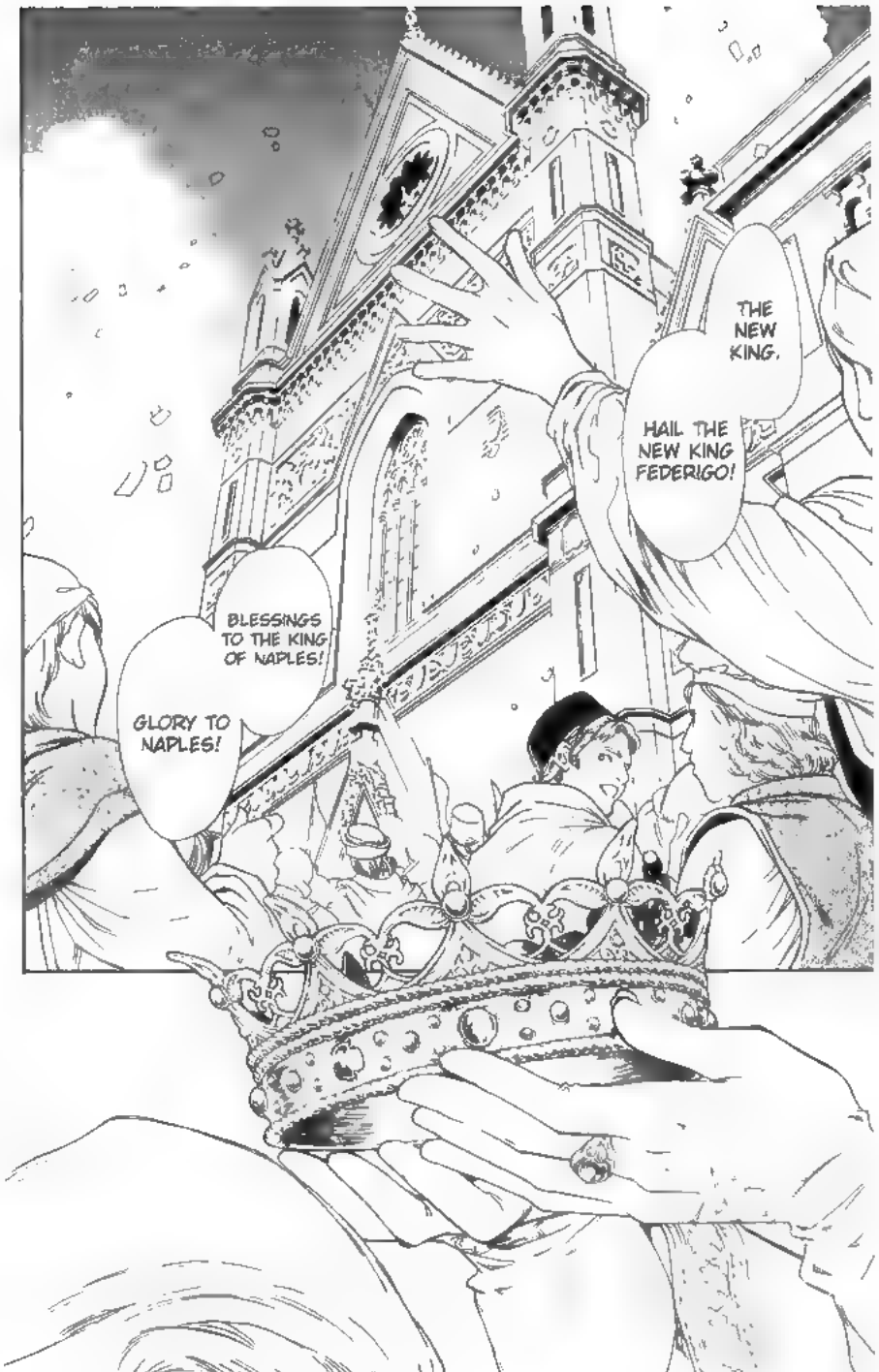
IT WAS JUST A LITTLE HEAT STROKE.
ONCE SHE'S GOTTEN SOME REST, SHE'LL BE FINE.
It's because the Naples sun is so intense
NN...
STROKE
!!
GASP
THIS COLD HAND... WHOSE IS IT?
WHO...

HEH ...
HEH HEH...
Hmph
!
HA... HA HA HA...
HE'S CRYING?
BUT..
HE COULDN'T BE...RIGHT?
BUT...
CESARE ..

WHAT ARE YOU DOING !?
LET ME GO—
NN.
NN... !
DEVIL !!
YOU ... ... DEVIL!

THIS PLACE IS FULL OF HIGH-CLASS TYPES.
I'M FINE HOW I AM.
I DON'T LIKE STANDING OUT.
SO IT'S THE BIRTHDAY OF OUR NEW KING. .
Hmm
I'M AN ILLEGITI-MATE CHILD SO. .
...I DON'T REALLY THINK THAT'LL MATTER..
AND YOU ARE HIS NEPHEW-- THE KING'S NEPHEW...
BUT WITH YOUR SOCIAL STANDING, YOU HAVE NO REASON TO ACT MODEST AROUND THEM. WHY NOT SHOW OFF A LITTLE?
DON'T YOU KNOW...
HOW SO?
CHUCKLE
...THAT EVERYONE'S SAYING YOU'VE BEEN STRUCK WITH THE ..UCK OF A FEATHERED ARROW?
MEANING YOU'LL BE GETTING THE POPE'S DAUGHTER. THOUGH IT'S STILL JUST A RUMOR.
I'D BE BETTER WITH-DRAWING MY NAME
HMM...
THEN THAT MAN WOULD BE MY BIG BROTHER...

OH NO...
I'M SUCH A SUCKER FOR THINGS LIKE THIS...
PAT
?
PAT
YOUR BODY. .
...IS SO WARM, SANCIA.


THE NEW KING.
HAIL THE NEW KING FEDERIGO!
BLESSINGS TO THE KING OF NAPLES!
GLORY TO NAPLES!

!?
NAPLES IS A GOOD PLACE
IT HAS NATURAL BEAUTY AND AS A BASE FOR MEDITERRANEAN SEA TRADING, IT'S A PRIME LOCATION.
THERE HAVE BEEN GREAT NUMBERS AFTER SUCH HEGEMONY.
LONG AGO IT WAS THE ROMAN EMPIRE, BYZANTINE EMPIRE AND SPAIN...THEN FRANCE.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
THIS MAN...!?
IN ORDER TO PROTECT THIS GEM OF THE MEDITER-RANEAN...
...I'M SURE SOMEONE LIKE YOU KNOWS WHAT WILL BE NECESSARY.

DUKE OF ARCE, SIGNOR LEONAR-DO...
...DUCHESS OF FERRARA, SIGNORA ELEONOLA.
I HOPE YOU CAN RELAX FOR A WHILE AT MY CASTLE...
...CARDINAL BORGIA.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

HUH?
CHUCKLE
WATCH OUT FOR WHAT?
PAT
THAT'S THE KIND OF FAMILY THEY ARE.
YOU SHOULD ALSO WATCH OUT, ALFONSO.
THAT'S THE BORGIA FAMILY FOR YOU.
THAT KIND OF TRUTH DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO THEM.
...CATCHING THEIR EYE, AS YOU HAVE, IS LIKE BEING THROWN INTO THE LION'S DEN. OR SO I HEAR.
I THINK YOU'RE A PRETTY CUNNING GUY, BUT...
THIS!
LOOK AT LADY LUCREZIA'S CASE.
THE MOMENT IT'S DECIDED THAT THEY SHOULD JOIN HANDS WITH NAPLES, HER CURRENT HUSBAND FINDS HIMSELF DISCARDED.

Ah.
WHAT!? ARE YOU SURE!?
BUT ISN'T THERE THE RUMOR THAT HE LEADS A RATHER SECULAR LIFE?
THEN I WONDER IF THEY'LL ANNOUNCE CANDIDATES FOR HIS BRIDE!
IT'S A WASTE THAT SUCH A FITTING YOUNG MAN BE IN SUCH AN OCCUPATION.
DON'T YOU THINK?
HEY, ISN'T THAT CARDINAL BORGIA A FINE MAN?
HE'S SO YOUNG! ♡
YEAH!
YOU FOOL, I DON'T REMEMBER CALLING YOU HERE!
WHOA THERE!
IT WOULDN'T BE YOU LADIES AT ALL.
...OR PRINCESS SANCIA.
IF ANYONE'S GOING TO BE MADE A CANDIDATE, IT'LL BE PRINCESS CARLOTTA...
LADY CARLOTTA, I CAN IMAGINE... BUT SANCIA!?
SHE'S ALREADY MARRIED, ISN'T SHE?

I DON'T KNOW..
EVEN THOUGH THE FLOWERS GOD CREATED ARE SO ELEGANT AND GORGEOUS ...
..THE TUMULT OF MAN'S WORLD IS SO UNSIGHTLY.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
CARDINAL BORGIA?
ARE YOU ALSO NOT VERY GOOD WITH BANQUETS?
OR DO YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH ME?

CUDDLE
SNUGGLE
would a bed have been better?
AT THIS POINT IN TIME, NO OFFICIAL OFFER HAS BEEN MADE TO ME.
SO WHEN IT COMES, THEN WILL I THINK ABOUT IT.
THE LION'S DEN, HUH? SOUNDS WARM.
ALFONSO!
NAH.
I'D RATHER BE SURROUNDED BY THESE FLOWERS.
BUT ON TO A LIGHTER SUBJECT. COME WITH ME TO THE GARDEN! THE FLOWERS ARE BLOOMING IN SO MANY COLORS THAT IT'S QUITE BEAUTIFUL.
Ecole! Now I've said it
JUST ABOUT ANY MAN'S YOUR TYPE!
WELL!
HE'S MY TYPE.
HE'S SUCH A STRANGE FELLOW!
SIGNOR ALFONSO'S THE NEW KING'S NEPHEW?
HAAH.

ARE YOU OKAY?
PHEW, THAT SCARED ME.
WHO WAS THAT!?
TCH!
GASP
SISTER!
So then...
I told him, "I didn't call for you."

!
COMPARED TO YOU, I'M PROBABLY QUITE DULL...
I SEE. YOU SEEM TO BE AN INTERESTING MAN.
I WANTED TO TALK WITH YOU IN PRIVATE.
THOUGH IT'S TRUE ABOUT MY NOT BEING GOOD WITH BANQUETS
THUNK

!?
THUD

shave
-kkkk!
YOU'RE IN MY WAY! MOVE IT!
DASH
SISTER!
DASH
WHAT'S GOING ON!?
VOLPE! SEIZE THAT MAN!

SLAP
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU PUT ME IN SUCH DANGER!
JUST WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO PULL!?
I'M SORRY.
MISTRESS SANCIA! ARE YOU HURT?
I'M FINE. LET'S GO.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SISTER!
UU... NG...
THAT WAS AN INCREDIBLY SKILLFUL THROW...
HOW'S OUR INTRU-DER?
JUST WHO WAS THIS MAN?
STABBED RIGHT THROUGH THE HEART.
AL...
...FONSO!
THANK GOOD-NESS.
NOTHING HAPPENED.

CHATTER
YOUR SKILL WITH A KNIFE THROW IS QUITE SUPERB. WHERE DID YOU LEARN IT?
I LEARNED IT BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANY CONFIDENCE IN MY PHYSICAL STRENGTH
SUCH ARE THE TIMES WE LIVE IN. IF YOU DON'T ARM YOURSELF WITH SOME KIND OF WEAPON, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO PROTECT THAT WHICH YOU WISH TO PROTECT
THAT WHICH YOU WISH TO PROTECT?
PLENTY OF THINGS.
PLENTY.
BY THE WAY, YOUR HIGHNESS. SOME GOSSIPY FELLOWS HAVE BEEN WONDERING...
...WHICH WOMAN YOU DESIRE A UNION WITH CARLOTTA...
...OR MY SISTER SANCIA?

!?
KNOCK
I REALLY MESSED UP.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL HIM...
...BUT MY BLOOD BOILED OVER.
THAT INTRU-DER.
DID YOU KNOW HIM?
PERHAPS HE WAS AN ASSASSIN SENT BY SANSEVERINO OF SALERNO.
SMILE
THE ARROWS OF HIS MEN ARE VERY UNIQUE.
SINCE THEY'RE BITTER ENEMIES OF THE ARAGON FAMILY, IT'S A COMMON OCCURRENCE.
I'M SORRY TO HAVE GOTTEN YOUR HIGHNESS CAUGHT UP IN THIS.

BUT I ..
IF WHAT YOU WANT TO PROTECT IS SOMEBODY SPECIAL...
...THEN YOU NEED MORE POWER THAN YOU HAVE NOW TO DO SO.
AND I SHALL GIVE YOU THAT, ALFONSO.
WHY ...
...DO YOU THINK THAT?
...MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO LOVE YOUR LITTLE SISTER.
I ALREADY HAVE SOMEONE TO WHOM I'VE DEVOTED MY HEART.
..HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS
THE HEART ...
Heh heh
I'M SORRY BUT I DON'T SWING THAT WAY.
IT'S YOU.
ALFONSO D'ARAGON.
!
THOUGH MAYBE I WOULDN'T MIND BEING WITH A MAN AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOU...
YOU'RE GOOD AT FEIGNING IGNORANCE.
HMPH.
WHAT'S THIS ALL OF A SUDDEN?
IN THE PRIESTHOOD, SUCH A THING IS A BLASPHEMY TO GOD.
BUT IF I MUST ANSWER ...
THE ROMAN POPE WANTS TO CREATE STRONG RELATIONS WITH THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES.
FOR YOU, BEING GIVEN THE DAUGHTER OF THE POPE...
...MIGHT BE A TREASURE YOU'VE ALREADY THOUGHT OF HOLDING.
GRANT US THE BLOOD OF BOTH THE NAPLES ROYALTY AND ARAGON ROYALTY THAT RUNS THROUGH YOUR VEINS.

IF THIS HAPPENS
...YOU'LL BE BOTH MY OLDER SISTER AND A SISTER-IN-LAW.
Heh heh.
THAT'S WHAT I CALL COMPLICATED.
ALFONSO, YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY BE SERIOUS ABOUT ACCEPTING THIS!
TELL HIM NO THIS INSTANT! IT'LL BE A PREPOSTEROUS FARCE!
AND IF I SAY NO?
WHOOSH
LUCREZIA IS AN ANGEL.
LET US TELL THE KING OF NAPLES THAT YOU AND I HAVE MADE A CONTRACT, SHALL WE?
!
CLICK

DON'T YOU LOVE YOUR LITTLE SISTER?
CESARE ?
YOU...
LUCREZIA IS MY LITTLE SISTER.
I HOPE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND THAT...
THIS IS POLI-TICS.
A BARGAIN BETWEEN COUNTRY AND COUNTRY.
...ARE THE FIRST ONE TO CALL ME BY MY NAME.
YOU ARE CORRECT ALFONSO.
I, AS ONE WHO CARRIES THE SAME BLOOD, LOOK UP TO AND LOVE HER.
BUT NOT IN THE SAME WAY THAT YOU MIGHT LOVE A SISTER.

I SUP-POSE YOU'RE RIGHT
WOW, SHE DID YOU IN SHOW-INGLY.
THAT'S YOUR OLDER SISTER FOR YOU, THOUGH.
You okay?
THAT'S HER ALL RIGHT!
CREAK
UGH ...
AH!
AAH ...!

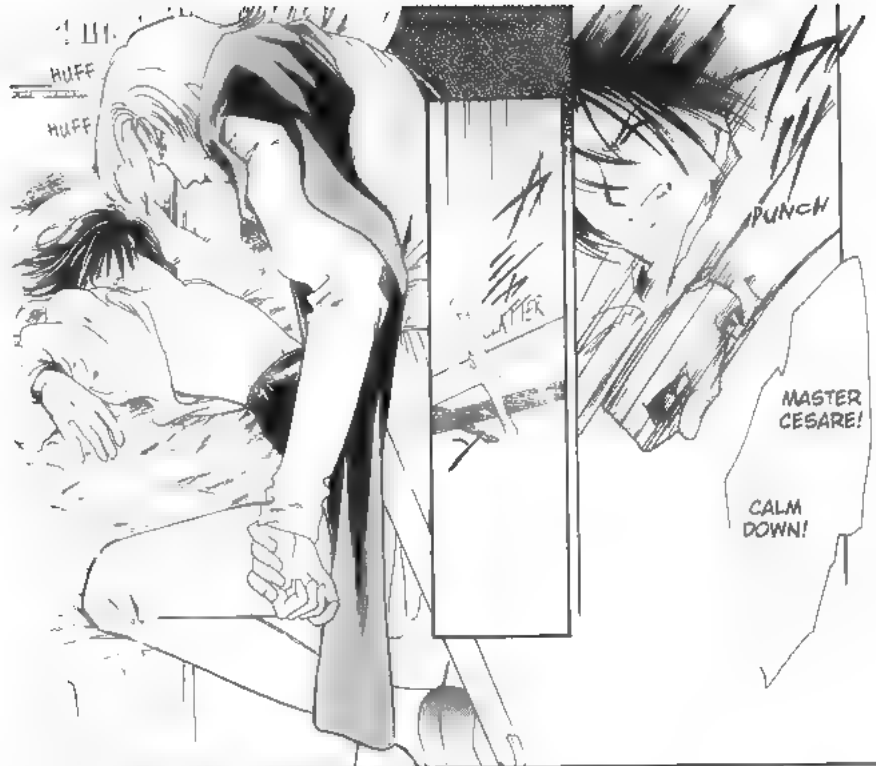
IF YOU SLAP SOMEONE ON THE RIGHT CHEEK, THEN SLAP HIM ON THE LEFT, TOO. ISN'T THAT HOW IT GOES?
I'M NOT CHRISTIAN, SO I DON'T RECALL.
FINE, ALFONSO.
YOU'LL REGRET NOT LISTENING TO ME!
MARK MY WORDS, YOU'LL REGRET IT!!
LET ME GO!!
Ow ow!
Bowing him to a pulp.

MASTER CESARE!
BANG
NO!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?
THIS BODY PROVOKED ME!
SO I'M GOING TO CHOP THIS ARM OFF!
LET GO!
LET GO, VOLPE!
MASTER CESARE!
BANG
D...
...ON'T!
DON'T COME IN, VOLPE!
I'M... FINE!
MASTER CESARE!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
RRRR!
AH!
AAH ...!!
OOH!
GAAAH!!
IF YOU DON'T OPEN THIS DOOR FOR ME. .
...I'LL KICK IT OPEN!
IS IT ANOTHER FIT!?

WHAT VISIONS OF HELL COME BEFORE HIS EYES?
AN UNFATHOMABLE ANGUISH FROM BREACHING THE LIMITS OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE.
A GRAND WAR TO WHICH HE CANNOT SURRENDER HIS SPIRIT.
UHH...
AAAAH!

BECAUSE THAT IS THE ONLY THING I CAN DO.
THE LEAST I CAN DO IS BEHOLD YOUR WAR WITHOUT CASTING DOWN MY EYES.

I AM SURE YOU WOULD NEVER UNDERSTAND IT. NOT SO LONG AS YOU SERVE AS HIS "LIGHT."
YOU WOULDN'T APPRECIATE THIS, CHIARO.
THIS TRAGIC BEAUTY OF AN ANGEL TRYING TO FALL FROM GRACE.


HUFF
HUFF
PUNCH
MASTER CESARE!
CALM DOWN!

SINCE COMING TO NAPLES
NO... SINCE BEING SEPARATED FROM CHIARO THE FREQUENCY OF THESE ATTACKS HAVE INCREASED
I'M SORRY BUT...
...I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TIE YOU UP.
THOUGH THIS MAN'S POWERS ARE STRONGER THAN OTHERS...
..HE'S REACHING HIS LIMIT.

I CAN ONLY GAZE INTO THE "DARKNESS."
ATTEN TION
CLICK

THAT IS WHY I'VE BROUGHT THIS DOCUMENT TO YOU
IT'S A CERTIFICATE DEFAULTING YOUR MARRIAGE. NOW, IF YOU'D PLEASE SIGN.
WITH THIS, YOU WILL BE FREED FROM ALL HUMILIATION.
!
WITH THE FRENCH ARMY AGAIN TARGETING SOUTHERN ITALY, THE SFORZA FAMILY OF MILAN IS NECESSARY BACKING FOR THE POPE.
...OR MORE ACCURATELY, THE SFORZA HOUSEHOLD'S BEEN SHAMED!
I'VE BEEN SHAMED...
COME NOW, MAKE A DECISION.
THERE IS ONLY ONE PATH FOR YOU
BUT CARDINAL SFORZA...
...I'VE BEEN BRANDED WITH THE STIGMA OF BEING IMPOTENT!
IF YOU REFUSE, YOU'LL LOSE THE SECURITY YOU'VE HAD FROM MILAN.
THIS IS AN ORDER FROM THE FEUDAL LORD OF MILAN.
D.
DAMN!

THAT MY MOST BELOVED SON IS NO LONGER IN THIS WORLD.
I DIDN'T WANT TO REMEMBER IT.
YOU ARE NOT VANOZZA.
I KNOW NOW.
ENOUGH... LEAVE ME.
BECAUSE I COULDN'T FACE REALITY ..
...THIS IS THE REALITY I'VE CREATED FOR MYSELF.

CHIARO.
HEY YOU!
SERVES YOU RIGHT...
WHAT WAS HIS PROBLEM!?
BUT JUST SOME CIVILIAN OUGHTA MEAN NOTHING TO ME. TO LET A JOKE GET ME SO WORKED UP LIKE THIS... WHAT AM I DOING?
Endure it
DAMMIT ALL
PANTACILIA!?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
I'VE BEEN LOOKING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU!
WHOOSH

OH, LUCREZIA!
OR SHOULD I CALL YOU "THAIS" INSTEAD?*
BENEATH THIS GRAVE SLEEPS THE WIFE MADE THE POPE'S DAUGHTER. AND IF SHE IS A GIRL TO BE MADE A BRIDE—
WHAT IS THAT?
WHAT A STRANGE SONG
Ha ha ha ha!
It's popular not just in Rome but all over Italy
IT'S A SONG SINGING PRAISES TO THE PROSTITUTE, LUCREZIA!
WHAT? YOU DON'T KNOW? MY, YOU'RE BEHIND THE TIMES
*Editor's Note: A famous Egyptian prostitute who became a nun
GRAB
WAH!
HOW DARE YOU SING THAT SONG WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW THE FACTS!
WH...
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

YOU'LL BE SEEN HERE
COME OVER HERE.
WHY DID YOU...
...TAKE LUCREZIA INTO TOWN?
AH!
YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW DANGEROUS IT IS FOR A YOUNG LADY OUT HERE!

SHE TOLD ME SHE WOULDN'T EAT ANY-THING UNTIL SHE SAW YOU AGAIN.
WHAT COULD I DO? AFTER ALL, SHE IS A POPE'S DAUGHTER.
!
HAVE YOU LOST WEIGHT?
IT'S NOT PAN'S FAULT!
IT WAS ME! I MADE HER..

GRAB
CHIARO!
LUCREZIA!?

IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO YOU...
...WHAT WOULD I DO?
NOW THEN.
WE MUST BE QUICK.
I'M SORRY, BUT I...
FOOL!
WHY DIDN'T YOU WAIT?
I SAID I'D COME BACK TO SEE YOU, DIDN'T I!?
Eek!

CLANG

GO.
QUICKLY, MY LADY.
MY LADY!
FLAP

MY LADY...
HEY.
!
YOU!

DASH

ISN'T THAT NICE? THE YOUNG LADY IS A FREED WOMAN.
IT'S INSTRUCTING HER TO RETURN TO THE VATICAN TO TESTIFY IN HER DIVORCE.
HERE IS AN IMPERIAL DOCUMENT FROM HIS HOLINESS.
MY LADY, DON'T GET NEAR THIS MAN!
THANK YOU, IL PEROTTO!
TH...
AH...

HA HA!
WHAT, SHE'S CONFESSING HER SINS RIGHT AFTER MEETING HER LOVER? SHE'S QUICK!
WHAT...!?
THE LADY IS IN THE MIDDLE OF HER PRAYERS.
WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH HER?
IS SHE A WICKED WOMAN OF ROME?
OR A HOLY WOMAN OF ROME?
It's tricky to discern.
KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT, IL PEROTTO!
I WON'T FORGIVE ANY SLANDER AGAINST MY LADY!
PANTA-CILIA?
TSK!
TSK
STOP GRIPING.
I'VE COME WITH GOOD NEWS.
DON'T PLAY DUMB WITH ME.
SO IT'S NOT JUST PUBLIC GOSSIP OR THE LORD OF PESARO'S OWN SPUN TALES.

LIKE THAT MAN.
ONCE HE'S INVESTIGATED, HE'LL BE FOUND OUT FOR SURE. HE'LL BE TORTURED ONCE THEY HAVE HIM... AND DIE.
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO PUT THE MAN YOU LOVE IN SUCH DANGER...
...LADY LUCREZIA?
DON'T STIFFEN YOUR BODY SO. I'VE JUST COME TO DELIVER NEWS.
AND I'M A BUSY MAN MYSELF.
COME NOW, LET'S GET CLOSER.
AT LEAST UNTIL YOUR NEXT HUSBAND IS DECIDED.
DON'T MAKE THAT FACE.
I'M REALLY A NICE MAN.
IF YOU GUYS DON'T TELL ON ME, I WON'T TELL ON YOU.

STOP!
WH-WHAT'RE YOU--!
GRAB
AH!
HMMM.
THE GOOD SMELL OF A MATED FEMALE.
NO!
WHOA!
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN...
...GO AHEAD.
THOUGH I'LL HAVE TO REPORT TO THE MONASTERY ABOUT WHAT THE YOUNG LADY HAS BEEN UP TO.
IL PEROTTO, THIS KIND OF FORCED --!
I'LL REPORT YOU TO THE POPE HIMSELF!

ROOAR
MASTER CESARE.
DON'T WORRY, VOLPE.
NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN.
HOW VERY LIKE HIM. IT'S AS THOUGH THE PAIN HE ENDURED FOR THREE DAYS WAS JUST A LIE.
WHAT IS IT THAT'S KEEPING YOU SO STRONG?

MY LADY
I'LL BE BACK AGAIN SOON.
VERY SOON.
CHIARO.
CHIARO...

EVEN IF I MUST BE SMEARED WITH THE BLOOD OF SLAUGHTER...
EVEN IF I MUST COMPENSATE FOR IT WITH MY DEATH...
I...
...CAN ONLY GO DOWN THE PATH I BELIEVE IN.
NO MATTER HOW FAR IT GOES ...
...I WILL BE WITH YOU.
EVEN TO THE PITS OF HELL...
I KNEW ...
...YOU'D SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT, VOLPE.

WHAT IS IT?

MY SERVICE AS THE POPE'S SPECIAL ENVOY...
...AND...
...AS A CARDINAL...
...MAY SOON END.

!?
I'M...
...GOING BACK TO ROME.
I MUST MAKE THE PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THAT WHICH IS TO COME.
THAT WHICH WILL COME VERY SOON...

カンタレラ

AND HIS FACE WAS CHIARO'S.
IN THE MIDST OF MY SUFFERING, A GOLDEN ANGEL...
...APPEARED IN MY TORTURED MIND, CUTTING THROUGH THE DARKNESS.
HE WAS LIKE THE STATUE OF MICHAEL OF SANT'ANGELO.

TO BE CONTINUED IN CANTARELLA VOL. 7

The thing that most confused everyone in the studio had to be the men's tights. The clothing crossed over in front and back and was also tied with string. Meaning that the middle was the only part you could flip up. It's soooo ugly. But I suppose it's practical. Or is it!?

So yeah, I could use this space for a dirty joke but instead shall move on to say thank you for picking up volume 6. Since I will be working even harder to up the tension even more, I look forward to seeing you in the next volume!

Topics of 2003:
• In September 2003, as a part of the Art Jeuness galleries of Tokyo and Osaka, I'm preparing to hold an art exhibit (I'll be selling pieces too).
• I've been put in charge of doing the character design and illustrations for the PS2 "Gakuen Heaven" to be coming out in September. I'd appreciate your support there too.*

*Editor's Note: "Gakuen Heaven" has since become a major hit, with an anime series, a game sequel, novels, and a manga series. Higuri-sensei has been involved in the production of all versions of it.

And to top it all off, to those who helped me in the drawing of this manga:
Izumi Hijiri-san, Naoko Nakatsuji-san, Wakusa Miyakoshi-san, Mitsuru Fuyutsuki-san, Akiyoshi-san, kiyo-chan, Akiko Tawara-san, Kou Ozawa-san, Eiko Sen-san, Eri Koizumi-san, my chief Ryoka Oda-san, chief princess 凸
sparkling Y-sama, my editor-in-chief, and everyone at the printing company...thank you!

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Post Script

"Cantarella" has already broken into its sixth volume! For a while, it was in battle-mode, but now it's gone into lovey-dovey mode, so I think it's turning into more of a shojo manga. (Or am I wrong? Hmm...) Alfonso d'Aragon-kun's entrance was brief, but since he's a fun character to draw, I'm looking forward to his next appearance.

Even though I went to Italy, my reference material is pathetic! The interiors are just too intense! And the garments--!! They're all separated parts joined together by strings. Because they're joined like that, the undershirt pokes through at times; that's actually a part of the design. What's even more strange is the intentionally made incisions. Please imagine, for a moment, the garments of the Swiss guards of the Vatican. There. See how the sleeves are all fluttery and look like decorations?

In old-school manga, the sleeves and bloomers of princes looked like 凸. It looked this way because of the incisions that allowed for the material beneath to show through.

To draw this manga, I thoroughly examined all my research and finally understood all of it for the first time. I always would think of this while markering it all up with my assistant in charge of garments.

IN THE NEXT VOLUME...

AS LOVERS SEEK COMFORT IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS...

A DESPERATE CESARE PAYS THE PRICE OF HIS AMBITION.

Cantarella

Volume Seven on sale soon.

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